



TITLE:

<Book Reviews>Daniel F. Doeppers.  
Feeding Manila in Peace and War,  
1850-1945. Madison: University of  
Wisconsin Press, 2016, xvii+443pp.

AUTHOR(S):

Gealogo, Francis A.

---

CITATION:

Gealogo, Francis A.. <Book Reviews>Daniel F. Doeppers. Feeding Manila in Peace and War, 1850-1945. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016, xvii+443pp.. Southeast Asian Studies 2017, 6(3): 539-543

ISSUE DATE:

2017-12

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/231042>

RIGHT:

© Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

polyglot city of Yangon is missing from the book. It has its virtues, however, as it is nicely illustrated from the author's collection of personal photographs. Her description of the multiethnic nature of contemporary dragon dance competitions during Chinese New Year is fascinating. While the author rightly draws attention to the travails faced by Chinese in Yangon as descendants of the greater China in a country inherently suspicious of China, it is obvious from her account that actually life for many, if not most, of Yangon's Chinese and Chinese-descended residents has its moments of joy and contentment, perhaps more than she recognizes. The volume is an introduction, almost a guide, to parts of the life of Chinese in Yangon in the very recent past, but we await a more detailed and analytical definitive statement.

Robert Taylor

*ISEAS—Yusof Ishak Institute*

## References

- Li Yi. 2017. *Chinese in Colonial Burma: A Migrant Community in a Multiethnic State*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2015. *Yunnanese Chinese in Myanmar: Past and Present*. Trends in Southeast Asia, No. 12. Singapore: ISEAS.

## *Feeding Manila in Peace and War, 1850–1945*

DANIEL F. DOEPPERS

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016, xvii+443pp.

How does one feed a primary colonial city in a span of a century, given its complex social, political, ecological, demographic, and cultural dimensions? Daniel F. Doeppers's most recent book, *Feeding Manila in Peace and War, 1850–1945*, is able to successfully weave a narrative to the multilayered history of provisioning the colonial city of Manila. The book covers a century of the urban history of Manila as the city experienced a series of colonial transitions between its three major colonizers. It discusses the urban experience of Manila during periods of peace, revolutionary war, anticolonial resistance, epidemic and epizootic outbreaks, and demographic change.

Doeppers divides the history of provisioning Manila through the complex web of trade and social networks related to the subject matter. The first part deals with rice as a major staple in the diet of the majority of inhabitants in the city. The second deals with the many different forms of *ulam* (viands) that are usually eaten with rice. The third part deals with the conditions related to water and other drinks, as well as the introduction of different food and drink "novelty" items. Lastly, the book discusses the disruption of the established provisioning system that occurred

during the Japanese occupation. During the Second World War trade and production patterns were interrupted, which changed most of the existing provisioning system in the city. The war also had a negative impact on the local population, especially the resultant mass starvation that characterized the period.

Because of the complexity of the topic covered by the book, Doeppers employs the methodological tools of different disciplines to create his narrative. Provisioning a city should include a narrative of population movements, of international and local (temporary or permanent) migration patterns, of the impact of food on the epidemiological transition of the urban center, as well as mortality and morbidity figures. Through his appreciation of the demographic impact of provisioning the city, Doeppers discusses the role of ethnic Chinese traders not only from China but also from among the Chinese who eventually settled in the Philippines to participate in the network of trade and commerce that provisioning entailed. He also discusses the role of Spanish, American, Japanese, and other European and Southeast Asian peoples in defining the contours of food and trade in Manila. Most important, the author is able to highlight the role of the local population of Manila and other parts of the archipelago as they form part of the core population that not only consumed the food being brought to the city but also took part in its multifaceted system of exchange.

The narrative is also one of social relations and urban class structure in colonial Manila. The author discusses the formation of local and national elites as they engaged in activities related to provisioning the city's growing population. He narrates the experiences of investors, traders, landowners, storehouse managers, and other emerging elites who were engaged in food production, exchange, and distribution. The discussion of the growth and decline of oligarchic families, shifts and splits in the entrepreneurial history of a number of Philippine-based firms, and the history of emerging corporations is one of the most interesting portions of the book.

Doeppers also discusses details regarding the history of everyday life of ordinary *tenderas/os* (vendors), peasant farmers, salt producers, carabao hustlers and *tulisanes* (bandits), urban and rural poor, women workers, and, during periods of famine, starvation, wars, and revolution, the history of the experiences of local internal refugees, of those who were suffering from mass starvation resulting from human-made and natural calamities in history. He employs various historiographical tools, such as oral history interviews (some collected from as far back as 40 years ago), memoirs, recollections from other scholars and colleagues, and published family histories and biographies that were cleverly used to provide the story of personal experiences of individual participants that form part of the historical narrative.

While Doeppers's history is focused primarily on the human experience in relation to food, the geographer in the author is able to successfully integrate the ecological dimensions of food provisioning. In this regard, Doeppers discusses not only the urban geography of Manila but also the maritime and riverine networks, the mountain ranges, the agricultural plains, and the different

islands that supported the enterprise of provisioning the city. Even non-human elements that affected the provisioning of the city—such as the impact of the rinderpest epidemic on meat and milk consumption; the cholera epidemic and the unsuccessful attempts at introducing prohibitions on vegetable and water consumption; the cyclical blight that affected the production of certain cash crops like coffee; and the influenza pandemic's impact on betel nut chewing—are all combined to provide a unified picture of the city in the throes of epidemics, epizootics, and plant disease outbreaks. Moreover, the changing ecology of Manila and its environs is cleverly discussed by the author in relation to shifts in transportation systems, food technology, food preservation and distribution networks, and the use of emerging technologies with new products that altered the course of provisioning the city within a century.

Another important feature of the book is its clever use of maps, charts, graphs, and tables that not only assist the reader with a visual break in the long, detailed, and very interesting historical narrative of Manila's social history but also provide the necessary tools for readers to appreciate the conditions of the different periods covered by the book.

Although Manila was originally a Tagalog community, the nineteenth century evidently made the city more cosmopolitan and indeed the center of trade for the archipelago. Hence, the history of provisioning the city is naturally appreciated through the support network provided by the other Philippine provinces and international commerce. The importance of rice coming from Central and Northern Luzon, as well as Vietnam and Burma; of fish and fish products from Manila Bay, Laguna de Bay, and the Luzon and Visayas coasts; of coffee from Batangas and Indonesia; of vegetables from the Cordillera and China; and the histories of the many different products that fed the city become an integral part of the narrative. It is therefore not only a book about the urban history of Manila but also a history of the different localities as they responded to, and were affected by, the demands of the growing city for its provisions. This also provides the opportunity for the author to discuss the dynamic transformation of the diet of the population—as they became not only consumers of products coming from different places, but also recipients of complex and dynamic culinary traditions from different localities that affected their taste buds and cuisine.

Doeppers is correct in identifying the primacy and centrality of rice in the history of feeding Manila. The first and most extensive elaboration of a food product found in the book is devoted to rice. It is to be noted that even in linguistic terms, rice occupied a central, complex web of expression that can be further elaborated. As a matter of fact, the word for cooked rice (*kanin*) is the same term that Tagalogs use to refer to the very act of eating. Hence, *Kanin mo ito* may mean both “This is your cooked rice” and “Eat this.” Moreover, the need to utilize different terms for the different stages of rice production and preparation signifies the importance of the staple in the culinary vocabulary of rice in Tagalog. Hence, the need to distinguish *palay* (unhusked rice), *bigas* (husked, but uncooked rice), *kanin* (newly cooked rice), *saing/sinaing* (steamed rice), *tutong* (burnt rice at the bottom of the *palayok*); *malata* (cooked rice, but with more rice water in it); *malagat*/

*maligat* (cooked rice, but with less rice water in it); *malagkit* (sticky rice); *bahaw* (rice cooked hours or the day before, best for *sinangag*); *sinangag* (fried rice, usually using *bahaw* but not *kanin*); and the many other varieties of food using rice, generically called *kakanin* (dessert, but also derived from *kanin*) either in pounded or sticky form (*bibingka*, *biko*, *sapin sapin*, *puto*, *putobumbong*, *kalamay*, etc.). The impact of foreign influences on rice consumption led to the development of new forms of rice preparation, with *lugao* (porridge) and *chamorado* (chocolate rice porridge) becoming popular and, as Doeppers mentions, localized in Manila and Philippine cuisine.

While the notion of *ulam* may be appreciated in the Philippines as the generic term for anything that is eaten with rice, as the author correctly notes, it should be pointed out that for most of the Tagalog communities, everyday *ulam* is always fish or fish based. As a matter of fact, other Philippine languages are more explicit in this regard, as the terms for *ulam* and fish are identical and interchangeable, an indication that fish and fish product consumption is always done to complement *kanin* and therefore is always the everyday *ulam*. The terms for *ulam* and fish are the same for Ilocano (*sida*), Bicol (*sira*), Kapampangan (*asan*), and Pangasinan (*sira*). Meat and meat product consumption, therefore, is often appreciated as feast food; vegetables and fruit are usually cooked with fish for everyday consumption, or with meat for feast days.

Toponymic renderings of historical interpretations also provide some clues that Doeppers uses to describe the conditions of supplying and provisioning food for the city. Thus, Bauan is correctly identified as historically a good source of garlic, and Pangasinan is well known for salt production. Other possibilities to expand this interpretation of the importance of place names to provisioning can further add to Doeppers's narrative of provisioning Manila. Fish pens were naturally found in Manila Bay, with Baclaran as one of its major locations (*baklad*, fish pens). Other traditional place names also reveal similar information; thus, plant names, wood products, and tree species such as Indang (*Artocarpus cumingianus* Trec. Moraceae); Cauayan (*Bambusa blumeana* J. A. & J. A. Schult); Dao (*Dracontomelon dao* [Blco.] Merr & Rolfe; Talisay (*Terminalia catappa* L.); Sampalok (*Tamarindus indica* L.), to name a few, were also place names in the Philippines.

Theoretically grounded, methodologically sophisticated, and written in outstanding scholarly narrative, the book is able to integrate different elements of the history of Manila, the archipelago, and the region in a thought-provoking, remarkable account that spans the history of an entire century. The book is a solid contribution to historical scholarship and paves the way for other scholars of Southeast Asian studies, urban history, Philippine studies, and social history to follow the academic rigor that the author clearly manifests in this outstanding work.

Francis A. Gealogo

*Department of History, Ateneo de Manila University*

## References

Madulid, Domingo. 2001. *Dictionary of Philippine Plant Names*. 2 vols. Manila: Bookmark.

### *The Other Kuala Lumpur: Living in the Shadows of a Globalising Southeast Asian City*

YEOH SENG GUAN, ed.

London and New York: Routledge, 2014, xiii+220pp.

The rapid growth of Asian cities in recent decades, fueled by neoliberal policies, the accelerating production of real estate, and the global circulation of unprecedented amounts of capital, has received a great deal of scholarly attention over the past two decades. Scholarship has focused particularly on the political elites and their urban policies, the command and control centers of global capital, and the movers and shakers who circulate ideas. As a counter to the study of top-down urban processes and urban spectacles, there have been growing calls for empirical studies that examine how “regular” or marginalized urban residents are affected by these sudden urban changes, how they negotiate fragmentary spaces, and the survival strategies they develop in an environment that is hostile to their presence. *The Other Kuala Lumpur: Living in the Shadows of a Globalising Southeast Asian City* is a valuable contribution to this literature. Edited by Yeoh Seng Guan, the collection seeks to illuminate the Kuala Lumpur beyond its ambitious development agenda and “world-class” aspirations. Eight essays document the lives of residents—both citizens and non-citizens—who live in the “other Kuala Lumpur,” on the fringes and in the shadows of a city undergoing massive urban change.

*The Other Kuala Lumpur* takes a similar approach to Yasser Elsheshtawy’s insightful work on the United Arab Emirates, particularly in *Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle* (2010), a book that also seeks to illuminate the lives of subaltern residents in a city that aspires to be a world-class global city. A key difference between the contexts of Dubai and Kuala Lumpur lies in the composition of residents who are marginalized from developmentalist growth agendas. Residents of Dubai who hold Emirati citizenship are overwhelmingly Arab Muslims, while multireligious and multiethnic non-citizens are socially and spatially segregated from the Emirati population, with no path to citizenship.

In contrast, Kuala Lumpur is a far messier and more complex social milieu than Dubai. Malaysia is a highly diverse country consisting of people with a variety of ancestral origins (China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia), varied claims to the land, different legal statuses, and multiple religions (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Sikh). The highly uneven distribution of resources and opportunities introduced during the colonial era has been maintained and reproduced decades after independence, a dynamic that has been challenged through controversial preferential affirma-